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ABSTRACT

"Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs," which was published jointly by the American Library Association (ALA) and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) in 1988, is the most recent in a series of efforts to articulate and encode professional program and practice standards that have spanned the 20th century. Begun in 1983 by a joint writing committee of AECT and the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), "Information Power" focuses on the building level library media specialists' role in planning and providing leadership in the establishment of partnerships for the delivery of resources and services. These resources and services may vary according to the goals and objectives of the school. Physical and intellectual access to information, increasingly through networks extending well beyond the school, is the central unifying concept of the guidelines. This digest provides examples of activities planned for implementing the guidelines at the national, state, regional, district, building, and personal levels, and implementation procedures are outlined for each of the eight steps of the implementation cycle: (1) analyze organization; (2) gather data; (3) set goals; (4) establish priorities; (5) develop plans; (6) take action; (7) evaluate effectiveness; and (8) revise plans. (3 references) (GL)

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IMPLEMENTING INFORMATION POWER

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by

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Introduction

Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs, published jointly by the American Library Association (ALA) and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) in 1988, is the most recent in a series of efforts to articulate and encode professional program and practice standards which has spanned the twentieth century. Begun in 1983 by a joint writing committee of the AECT and the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), *Information Power* focuses on the building level library media specialist's role in planning and providing leadership in the establishment of partnerships for the delivery of resources and services. Resources and services vary according to the goals and objectives of the school. Physical and intellectual access to information, increasingly through networks extending well beyond the school, is the central unifying concept of the guidelines.

Levels of Implementation

There are several levels on which the new guidelines for school library media programs can be implemented: (1) national, (2) state, (3) regional, (4) district, (5) building, and (6) personal.

Activities planned at the *national* level have included two nationwide teleconferences, several receptions, an ALA pre-conference, the AASL President's Program, four implementation workshops, an AECT Pre-Conference Workshop, and a speakers' bureau. In addition, buttons, magazine articles, a newsletter, a discussion guide, a planning guide, transparency masters, a public relations guide, a checklist, a compilation of national, regional, state and local guidelines, a brochure, a personal professional development plan, and lobbying suggestions have been produced.

Similar activities may be adapted and conducted at the *state* level. Each state has been urged to name a coordinator and develop a state plan for carrying out implementation activities. A rich variety of projects is being undertaken among the states.

Regional level implementation has several definitions. Primarily, it means those activities conducted by the regional media centers within the various states. However, it may mean activities conducted with the purpose of influencing regional accrediting associations, such as the North Central Association and the Southern Association. It also means activities conducted by the regions of the American Association of School Librarians and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology. Each of these regions is a viable arena for guidelines implementation activities.

Plans for implementation of the guidelines at the *district* level are those made by the library media specialist(s) serving in districts where there is more than one school. They may be led by the district director where one is available or they may be the unified efforts of all the specialists working in a given district under a designated or elected chair.

At the *building* level, implementation plans are compatible with district level plans, but they may differ from them in any number of aspects according to the different goals, objectives, and priorities which govern the scope and direction of the building level program.

Finally, each specialist should have a commitment to *personal* professional growth and development derived from the new guidelines. One should continuously strive to be in position, prepared to undertake implementation and program development activities whenever the opportunity presents itself. A checklist for personal professional development has been designed to assist individual library media specialists in these efforts.

The Implementation Cycle

Implementation is a cyclical activity, renewing itself again and again in an ongoing quest for educational excellence. The implementation cycle presented here is a standard one which can be applied at any level of implementation planning. It comprises eight steps: (1) analyze organization, (2) gather data, (3) set goals, (4) establish priorities, (5) develop plans, (6) take action, (7) evaluate effectiveness, and (8) revise plans.

Organizational Analysis and Political Culture

The effectiveness of *organizational analysis* can be increased if the prevailing political culture is taken into account. There are a number of research-based analysis techniques that can aid the implementation process in this regard. In their work supported by a grant from the National Institute of Education (NIE-G-83-0138), researchers Frederick Wirt, Douglas E. Mitchell, and Catherine Marshall applied the ideas expressed by Daniel Elazar in *American Federalism: A View from the States* (1966), and later explored in depth in his *Cities of the Prairie* (1970), in which he identified three distinctive types of political culture:

1. **Traditionalist Political Culture** (TPC): Government's main function is maintaining traditional patterns, being responsive to a governing elite, with partisanship subordinated to personal ties.
2. **Individualistic Political Culture** (IPC): Government is a "marketplace" that responds to demands, favors economic development, and relies heavily on the political party as the vehicle for satisfying individuals' needs—hence a heavy emphasis on partisanship.
3. **Moralistic Political Culture** (MPC): Government is a means for achieving the good community, or "commonwealth," through positive action; non-governmental action is preferred but social and economic regulations are legitimate and sought, parties are downplayed, and bureaucracy is viewed positively as an agent of the people.

Wirt and the others surveyed the state education policy elite in six states representing each of the three political cultures (MPC: California, Wisconsin; IPC: Pennsylvania, Illinois; and TPC: Arizona, West Virginia). The policy elite were: a chairman and minority leader in the committees on

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education and education finance of both houses; the governor's chief education policy aide; a chief state school officer and staff aides responsible for seven state policy areas; lobbyists for teachers, superintendents, principals, and school boards; knowledgeable observers from academia; and a major newspaper. Through the survey, strong support was found for the existence of Elazar's political cultures among the education policy makers in the states.

The researchers then ranked the policy influentials in all six states as follows:

Influence	Rank	Policy Group
Insiders	1	Individual Member of the Legislature
	2	Legislators as a Whole
Near Circle	3	Chief State School Officer
	4	All Education Interest Groups Combined
	5	Teacher Organizations
	6	Governor and Executive Staff
	7	Legislative Staff
Far Circle	8	State Board of Education
	9	Others
Sometime Players	10	School Boards Association
	11	State Administrator Association
Other Forgotten Players	12	Courts
	13	Federal Policy Mandates
	14	Non-Educator Interest Groups
	15	Lay Groups
	16	Education Research Organizations
	17	Referenda
	18	Producers of Educational Materials

The schedule above combines all six states. When states were analyzed individually many differences appeared, confirming that state policy systems are quite complex. History, current crises, recent power shifts, and other elements contribute to many differences among the states.

The work of Wirt, Marshall, and Mitchell holds several implications for guidelines implementation:

1. The definitions of the political cultures can be used to identify the political cultures of other states through analytical methods or replication of the study.
2. Evidence of the political cultures can probably be found among district and building level policy makers.
3. Effective promotion of the school library media program should differ according to the political culture in which it is established:
   a. In a Traditional Political Culture, emphasis should be placed on preserving the fine tradition of the school library media program.
   b. In the Individualistic Political Culture, emphasis should be on the efficiencies and economies achieved by the school library media program.
   c. In the Moralistic Political Culture, emphasis should be placed on the popular support for the school library media program and the role it plays in providing information for community goal setting and program development.
4. The list of the policy elite may be applied in identifying the policy elite in each state.
5. The circle of influence may be applied to rank the policy influentials in each state, comparing it to the pattern for all six states as needed.
6. The circle of influence may be adapted for use in identifying policy influentials at the district and building levels.
7. The policy groups identified in the circle of influence may be targeted for activities to promote the implementation of school library media programs in each state.

The Remainder of the Implementation Cycle

In *gathering data* about one's organization, state statistical records are the best sources of comparison. *Information Power: Checklist for School Library Media Programs* and *Information Power: National, Regional, State, and Local Compilation,** disseminated at the implementation workshops conducted by AECT in late summer 1988, should also be of assistance in identifying and assembling the kinds of data needed to promote the development of school library media services. Not all the guidelines are of equal importance. Not all *goals* can be accomplished immediately or even within a year.

Developing a system of *priorities* for achieving goals is highly recommended. Priorities can be translated easily into short-, medium-, and long-range plans.

A Planning Guide for Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs and *Information Power: Checklist for School Library Media Programs* include forms for the development of action *plans*. A good action plan will have a device to assist the planners in *evaluating* how successful they were in carrying out the plan. Application of the checklist a second time is another approach to evaluation. The compilation of state, regional, and national standards may also be used as an evaluation model. Finally the plan is *revised*.

Guidelines implementation is no mysterious process. It is a systematic undertaking, beginning with a carefully and clearly thought out plan, followed by patient and persistent pursuit of a selected set of achievable goals. As each goal is met, another takes its place and the cycle begins anew.

* A number of publications supporting *Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs* were published by AASL and AECT in 1988.

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